

Deferral Information

Most healthy adults are eligible to give blood. However, there are some reasons a person may be deferred from donating — temporarily or permanently. A temporary deferral should not discourage donors from coming back. We always need donors! Deferral criteria have been established for the protection of those donating and those receiving transfusions in accordance with Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines.

Iraq Travel Deferral

Potential exposure to leishmaniasis, a disease spread by sand flies, means that those who have traveled to Iraq will be ineligible to donate blood for one year after their return. This deferral has left some of the ASBP's most dedicated supporters temporarily ineligible to donate. Men and women who may be called into combat are some of the ASBP's best donors because they know how important it is to make sure blood will be there for them or their buddy if they are injured. With a large number of these donors deployed or temporarily deferred, the program needs the support of those who remain eligible to maintain blood supplies required to support service members and their families at home and abroad.

Mad Cow Deferral

Much attention has been focused on the deferral of blood donors who may have been exposed to variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD), commonly known as Mad Cow Disease. While there have been no documented cases of vCJD being transmitted through blood transfusion, deferral of those who may have been exposed is the prudent course of action until a test to detect vCJD in blood can be developed. Though many people who were stationed in Europe must now be deferred, many others who served in this area may still be eligible. Being in Europe during specific years and for extended lengths of time are the main things to consider when evaluating whether or not you are eligible to donate. Potential donors will be deferred if they have:

- Traveled or resided in the United Kingdom from 1980 through 1996 for a cumulative period of three months or more.
- Been affiliated with the Department of Defense (DoD) and been stationed in Europe from 1980 through 1996 for a cumulative period of six months or more.
- Traveled or resided in Europe from 1980 to present for a cumulative period of five years (applies to DoD personnel on or after January 1, 1997).
- Received a transfusion in the United Kingdom since 1980.
- Received bovine insulin produced in the United Kingdom since 1980.

Bone Marrow and Organ Donation

The blood donor travel-related deferral criteria do not apply to organ and bone marrow/hematopoietic stem cell (HSC) donation. Those ineligible to donate blood due to potential vCJD exposure may still be eligible to donate organs and bone marrow. Visit the [Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network](#) for information on becoming an organ donor and the [National Marrow Donor Program](#) to learn how to join the National Bone Marrow Donor Registry. Yet another way to save a life!

Other Deferrals

There are reasons other than potential vCJD exposure that may cause donors to be deferred, however, many people who think they will be deferred may be eligible to donate. Not all medical conditions disqualify a person from donating. Some common reasons for deferral are listed below along with indications as to how long a person should refrain from donating. More specific deferral criteria will be added as this site is developed further.

You should not donate blood if you:

- Have donated blood in the last 55 days.
- Have had your ears-or any other part of your body-pierced in the past twelve months.
- Have had a tattoo or brand in the past twelve months.
- Have had an immunization recently. (deferral times vary from two weeks to one year, depending on the vaccine)
- Are taking certain medications. (most medications do not disqualify donation - call your local blood donor center to verify eligibility)
- Do not feel well.
- Have a low hemoglobin (iron) level. (this will be tested before you donate blood — you may donate as soon as your level meets the minimum criteria)
- Do not weigh at least 110 pounds.
- Have traveled to or visited a malaria endemic area in the last twelve months (a list of malaria endemic areas is available at your local blood donor center)
- Have uncontrolled hypertension. (this will be tested before you donate blood — you may donate as soon as your blood pressure meets the criteria)
- Have a cold, flu, or flu-like symptoms. (you are eligible to donate once you have been feeling better for three days)
- Are pregnant. (you may donate again six weeks after delivery)